



EPR-ER

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 8

999 18TH STREET - SUITE 300

DENVER, CO 80202-2466

<http://www.epa.gov/region08>

INITIAL OIL POLLUTION REPORT

Cut Bank Oil Seep

Cut Bank, Montana

I. BACKGROUND

Date: August 23, 2002
Subject: Oil Sheen in Cut Bank River
POLREP No.: POLREP #1 - Initial
OSC Name: Al Lange, On-Scene Coordinator
Agency: EPA
Unit: Region VIII
Emergency Response Program
999 18th Street, Suite 300
Denver, Colorado 80202
(303) 312-6987
Party Conducting the Action: EPA
Federal Project # (FPN): EO2806
Date Current Action Started: 08/23/02

II. SITUATION

Date of Original Notification: NRC620532 on 8/20/02
Material Involved: Oil
Quantity Discharged: Unknown
Substantial Threat: Yes
Resource Affected: Cliff face and Cut Bank River
Source Identification: Seepage from sandstone and silts-shales near the Cut Bank Oil Field.
Completion Date: TBD

III. SITE INFORMATION

A. Incident Category

Section 311(c) of the Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C. 1321(c) as amended by the Oil Pollution Act of 1990.



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B. Site Description

The site is located just southwest of the town of Cut Bank, Montana. It consists of a steep cliff face that is composed of sandstones, silts and shales. Near the top of the cliffs, water is seeping out from sandstones and silts-shales. The water is carrying black aromatic oil (probably crude oil) that looks like the oil from Cut Bank Field. The water-oil was flowing down rills from a small basin area and coalescing into one stream that feeds into the River. The cliff is steep, dropping about 200' in a distance of about 530'.

IV. RESPONSE INFORMATION

A. Situation

1. Removal Actions

The Cut Bank Fire Department installed some straw bales to absorb the oil.

The Cut Bank River was boomed and containment of the sheen was nearly complete.

The Montana Department of Environmental Quality requested EPA's presence to stabilize the situation.

EPA's contractor (Environmental Restoration) was activated and sent to the site.

The stabilization work occurred on August 24 - 26, 2002.

Thereafter, the following activities were coordinated by the OSC:

The local fire department is tasked to remove the oil as necessary and maintain the system of three tanks.

The oily pads are being stored on site in barrels.

2. Enforcement

TBD

B. Activities that have taken place at the Site:

The removal actions consisted of digging far enough into the cliff face so that tin sheeting will direct the water/oil to enter 126 gallon stock tanks. PVC piping was installed to allow separation of the oil and water with the water draining from under the oil. Further examination found some new oil seeps below the first tank's level, so a second tank was installed about 25' below the first. The oil was removed using sorbent pads. The system worked well and after a few hours, there was a very noticeable decrease in the sheen on the Cut Bank River; after 12 hours no sheen was noted on the River from this flowage. Water flowed into tank one at about 1.1 gallons per minute and slightly faster into tank two at 1.8 gallons per minute. Tank one collects the greater amount of oil at an estimated 2 gallons per day.

However, a very visible sheen was noted entering the Cut Bank River about 30' down stream from the sheen noted above. Examination of the neighboring small drainage basin found significant oil/water flowage. In this case the cliff was too steep to do hand digging, so tank number three was installed at the River's edge. A raft was used to transport the equipment across the River.

C. Future Activities:

Continue to collect and dispose of the oil fraction by the local fire department personnel.

Remediate the ranch road used to access the River.

Determine if a PRP exists; the area is an abandoned portion of the Cut Bank Oil Field. The area is now covered with homes.

Check oil pipelines in the area.

D. Key Issues

There are no key issues identified at this time.

V. COST INFORMATION

EPA opened the fund to respond to the release for \$50,000.